

[WY-060-1310-00]

**Cave Gulch-Bullfrog-Waltman Natural Gas Development Project, WY**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Cave Gulch-Bullfrog-Waltman Natural Gas Development Project in Natrona County, Wyoming.

**SUMMARY:** In 1994, a major gas reservoir was discovered at Cave Gulch. At present, seven companies (Chevron U.S.A. Production Company, Barrett Resources Corporation, Prima Oil & Gas Company, Goldmark Engineering, Inc., W. A. Moncrief, Jr., Marathon Oil Company, and John P. Lockridge, Inc.) operate oil and gas leases in the Cave Gulch-Bullfrog-Waltman area and have applied for permits to drill. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a field development Environmental Assessment (EA) and Raptor Mitigation Plan were completed in May 1995, which assessed the potential impacts of 20 proposed wells and further assessed cumulative impacts to raptor nesting of 49 proposed wells (Barrett Resource Corporation, Cave Gulch Area Natural Gas Development Project, EA No. WY-062-95-034). During the preparation of the Cave Gulch EA, 4 wells were drilled; after EA approval, 16 wells were approved, and 14 of those were drilled as of January 16, 1996. In December 1994, an EA was initiated for Chevron U.S.A. Production Company on the Waltman area adjacent to Cave Gulch. The Waltman Area Natural Gas Development Project EA was to provide a cumulative assessment of proposals in and near both areas. Subsequent to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Cave Gulch EA and during the preparation of the Waltman EA, 14 additional wells were proposed. The need for pipeline system upgrades, a possible gas processing plant, and well spacing to allow more wells per lease became known. New well proposals, possible additional facilities, and increased impacts above those previously predicted in either EA, resulted in the decision by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on January 16, 1996, to vacate the Cave Gulch EA Record of Decision (ROD), suspend completion of Chevron's EA and to prepare an EIS. After the EIS analysis, it may also be necessary to amend the *Platte River Resource Area and Resource Management Plan*, approved in 1985 to change the protection for raptor nests in

field development situations from seasonal to year-round.

**DATES:** As part of this process, an open house and a public scoping meeting will be held April 17, 1996. The meeting will be located in the Hilton Inn, 800 No. Poplar, Casper, Wyoming. An open house will be from 5:00 p.m., until 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. The schedule for the EIS preparation will be finalized after the scoping meeting.

**ADDRESSES:** Questions or concerns should be addressed to Ms. Kate Padilla, Team Leader for the Cave Gulch-Bullfrog-Waltman Natural Gas Development Project EIS, Platte River Resource Area Office, P.O. Box 2420, Mills, Wyoming 82644.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kate Padilla, telephone: 307-261-7600 or Celia Skillman, Team Member, telephone: 307-261-7500.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Generally, the area is located about 50 miles west of Casper, Wyoming, and about 5 miles north of the town of Waltman. The analysis area could cover about 25 to 30 square miles. The area also contains a concentration of raptor nests, mainly golden eagles and ferruginous hawks. In January 1996, the BLM's Wyoming Reservoir Management Group was asked to complete a reservoir analysis of the Cave Gulch area. On February 20, 1996, they completed the *Cave Gulch-Bullfrog-Waltman EIS Area Preliminary Reservoir Analysis* report for this area (available upon request). The report, based on geologic and engineering data, indicated that the gas producing area may be more extensive than the currently developed area. The optimum number of wells may be as great as 200 wells. Well spacing may range between one well per 20 acres to one well per 160 acres because of complex geology. The preliminary reservoir analysis will be revised after public review. The final reservoir analysis will be used in conjunction with other data to define an area of analysis.

BLM may allow some specified development during preparation of the EIS. Development would be guided by establishing screening criteria to be used to evaluate proposals. BLM will collaborate with interested publics to establish these criteria. In addition, BLM intends to utilize as much as possible the data contained in the various assessments which have previously been prepared for the area. The data would be supplemented as needed or required to accommodate the area of analysis and the scope of development.

Dated: March 12, 1996.

Alan R. Pierson,

*State Director.*

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**National Park Service****Maine Acadian Culture Preservation Commission; Notice of Meeting**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (PL 92-463) that the Maine Acadian Culture Preservation Commission will meet on Thursday, April 18, 1996.

The meeting will convene at 7:00 PM at the Eagle Lake School in Eagle Lake, Aroostook County, Maine.

The Maine Acadian Culture Preservation Commission was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the Maine Acadian Culture Preservation Act (PL 101-543). The purpose of the Commission is to advise the National Park Service with the respect to:

The development and implementation of an interpretive program of Acadian culture in the state of Maine; and

The selection of sites for interpretation and preservation by means of cooperative agreements.

The Agenda for this meeting is as follows:

1. Review and approval of the summary report of the meetings held August 17, 1995, and October 19, 1995.

2. Reports of Maine Acadian Culture Preservation Commission working groups.

3. Report of the National Park Service project staff.

4. Revision of Article VIII, Maine Acadian Culture Preservation Commission Bylaws, to eliminate the requirement of a court reporter at Commission meetings.

5. Opportunity for public comment.

6. Proposed agenda, place, and date of the next Commission meeting.

The meeting is open to the public. Further information concerning Commission meetings may be obtained from the Superintendent, Acadia National Park. Interested persons may make oral/written presentations to the Commission or file written statements. Such requests should be made at least seven days prior to the meeting to: Superintendent, Acadia National Park, P.O. Box 177, Bar Harbor, ME 04609-0177; telephone (207) 288-5472.

Dated: March 12, 1996.

Marie Rust,

*Field Director, Northeast Field Area.*

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